

spirit of state and local control that I, along with Senator JEFFORDS, introduce legislation to give citizens a say in Postal Service decisions to open, close, relocate or consolidate post offices.

Since its establishment over 200 years ago, with Benjamin Franklin as the first Postmaster General, the United States Postal Service has faithfully delivered the mail to generations of Americans. Across small town America, the post office is still the center of the community, the glue that holds towns like Livingston and Red Lodge, Montana together.

Unfortunately, Americans all over have suffered as the Postal Service opens, closes, or moves post offices without considering the impact their decision will have on the community.

Today, Senator JEFFORDS and I are introducing legislation to change that. With passage of the Post Office Community Partnership Act, downtown communities will have an increased say in their future. They will have input into Postal Service decisions that affect their communities, and they will be allowed the chance to offer alternatives to Postal Service changes. Under current law, communities have little say when the USPS decides to pull up stakes. Our bill would change that by allowing communities to work with the Postal Service in the decision-making process.

With the exception of some minor changes, this is the same bill that we introduced last spring, the one that received 76 votes of support when it was attached to the Treasury Postal Appropriations bill.

I was pleased when Senator JEFFORDS and I received such overwhelming support for our legislation in the 105th Congress.

However, the amendment was stripped when the Senate and House reconciled their bills; I was very disappointed that the wishes of three in four senators were ignored in passing the final legislation through conference committee.

That small communities across America are reeling from the effects of downtown post office closings is evidence enough that their voices need to be heard, and I am confident that this year we will pass this important bill. I believe that with mutual cooperation, the interests of communities and the Postal Service can be served. The nature—indeed the very name—of this legislation is participation.

We will not give up the fight. For the sake of small communities everywhere, I will continue to do my utmost to see that their views are heard and accounted for. I am confident that with this bill's passage our communities and this important American institution may begin a new era of cooperation for the good of all involved. And we can put the community back in the Postal Service.

Mr. President, I hope my colleagues will join Senator JEFFORDS and me in passing this important legislation.

Mr. JEFFORDS. Mr. President, I rise today to discuss a bill that my colleague Senator BAUCUS and I are re-introducing titled the "Post Office Community Partnership Act of 1999".

Aside from a few technical changes, the bill is similar to the one we introduced in the 105th Congress that was supported by so many of our colleagues in a 76-21 vote last July. Unfortunately our postal language was dropped from the underlying bill during conference with the House. However, I am hopeful that this year our bill will become law. I should add that this year we have coordinated our efforts with Representative BLUMENAUER of Oregon and an identical companion bill is being put forward in both the Senate and the House.

Mr. President, I live in a small town in Vermont. I understand the importance downtowns and village centers play in the identity and longevity of communities. Downtowns are the social and economic hearts of small communities. They are where neighbors catch up on the news, shop, worship, and celebrate national holidays.

Our bill will enable the residents of small villages and large towns to have a say when the Postal Service decides that their local post office will be closed, relocated, or consolidated. Local post offices are important tenants in any vibrant downtown. A recent article in *USA Today* cited a 1993 study that found that 80 percent of the people who shopped downtown planned their visit around a visit to the post office.

There is much talk in the news today about revitalizing our downtowns and encouraging smart growth. I say to my colleagues, if you want to encourage smart growth, let's start by doing what we can do to keep federal facilities such as post offices in downtowns.

Some of my colleagues may ask why this legislation is necessary. A story from my home state of Vermont will answer that question.

A few years ago the general store on the green in Perkinsville, Vermont went bankrupt and the adjacent post office wanted to leave the small village center for a new building outside of town. By the time the community was aware of the relocation, plans were so far along—the new building had actually been constructed based on the promise of the post office as the anchor tenant—that there was no time to fully investigate in-town alternatives. One elderly resident wrote that in contrast to families now being able to walk to the post office, "we certainly won't be walking along the busy Route 106 two miles or more to get postal services."

Mr. President, post office closings and relocations are occurring all across the country and especially in small and

rural communities. My colleagues will quickly discover similar examples in their own states where the removal of the post office has harmed the economic vitality of the downtown area, deprived citizens without cars of access, and contributed to sprawl.

Mr. President, post offices in Vermont and across the nation are centers of social and business interaction. In communities where post offices are located on village greens or in downtowns, they become integral to these communities' identities. I believe that this legislation will strengthen the federal-local ties of the Postal Service, help preserve our downtowns, and combat the problem of sprawl. I urge my colleagues to join Senator BAUCUS and me in support of this important legislation.

#### ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 13

At the request of Mr. SESSIONS, the name of the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. McCONNELL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 13, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide additional tax incentives for education.

S. 493

At the request of Mr. SARBANES, the name of the Senator from Virginia (Mr. ROBB) was added as a cosponsor of S. 493, a bill to require the Secretary of the Army, acting through the Chief of Engineers, to evaluate, develop, and implement pilot projects in Maryland, Virginia, and North Carolina to address problems associated with toxic microorganisms in tidal and non-tidal wetlands and waters.

S. 508

At the request of Mr. LEAHY, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 508, a bill to prohibit implementation of "Know Your Customer" regulations by the Federal banking agencies.

S. 528

At the request of Mr. SPECTER, the names of the Senator from Utah (Mr. HATCH) and the Senator from Alabama (Mr. SESSIONS) were added as cosponsors of S. 528, a bill to provide for a private right of action in the case of injury from the importation of certain dumped and subsidized merchandise.

S. 543

At the request of Ms. SNOWE, the name of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. DEWINE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 543, a bill to prohibit discrimination on the basis of genetic information with respect to health insurance.

#### AMENDMENT NO. 40

At the request of Mr. ALLARD the names of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. SANTORUM), the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. ENZI), the Senator from Utah (Mr. BENNETT), and the Senator from Texas (Mr. GRAMM) were added as cosponsors of amendment No. 40 proposed to S. 280, a bill to provide for education flexibility partnerships.

At the request of Mr. ROBB his name was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 40 proposed to S. 280, *supra*.

At the request of Mr. NICKLES his name was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 40 proposed to S. 280, *supra*.

**SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 16—EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF CONGRESS THAT THE GOVERNMENT NATIONAL MORTGAGE ASSOCIATION GUARANTY FEE SHOULD NOT BE INCREASED TO PROVIDE INCREASED REVENUES**

Mr. GRAMS (for himself and Mr. GORTON) submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

S. CON. RES. 16

Whereas the Government National Mortgage Association, known as Ginnie Mae, was established as a wholly owned corporation of the United States to facilitate the worldwide sale of investment securities backed by mortgages insured or guaranteed by the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) or the Veterans Administration (VA), which is now the Department of Veterans Affairs;

Whereas Ginnie Mae assesses a fee to lenders issuing such securities and notes for the guaranty, by Ginnie Mae, of the timely payment to investors of principal and interest of the securities and notes;

Whereas the guaranty fee currently charged by Ginnie Mae, at a rate of 6 basis points, has produced significant net revenue for the Federal Government each year;

Whereas Ginnie Mae is actuarially sound and its reserves are sufficient to protect the taxpayers of the United States from any loss;

Whereas the cost of home ownership is increasing, thereby making the dream of home ownership unattainable for many families in the United States;

Whereas FHA and VA loans are used primarily by first-time and minority homeowners to achieve the dream of home ownership;

Whereas Congress should seek to eliminate barriers to affordable housing and reduce the costs of home ownership; and

Whereas proposals to increase the Ginnie Mae guaranty fee above the current rate, if enacted, would constitute a tax on home ownership, would increase the costs of owning a home, and would ultimately deny many Americans the opportunity to own a home; Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring), That it is the sense of the Congress that any increase in the guaranty fee assessed by the Government National Mortgage Association above the rate currently in effect constitutes an unnecessary and unwarranted tax on home ownership that cannot be justified as sound public policy or as necessary for financial soundness of the Government National Mortgage Association and, therefore, should not be used to provide increased revenues for the Federal Government to offset other expenditures.*

Mr. GRAMS. Mr. President, today I am submitting a Senate Concurrent Resolution expressing the sense of the

Congress that guaranty fees charged by the Government National Mortgage Association—or Ginnie Mae—should not be increased as a means of offsetting additional Federal spending. I am pleased that my colleague from Washington, Senator GORTON, is joining me in submitting this resolution.

As the Federal budget process proceeds over the next few months, there will inevitably be attempts to manipulate revenues to fund pet projects. Unfortunately, what Washington calls revenues, Americans call taxes. This resolution serves notice that taxes on American homebuyers—in this case through higher fees on the securities used to fund the loans—should not be used to fund general government.

I am pleased that a companion resolution—H. Con. Res. 10—has been introduced in the House. I urge my colleagues to join in expressing their sense that increased taxes on homebuyers to fund general government spending are inappropriate, and I invite my colleagues to add their name to this resolution.

**AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED**

**EDUCATION FLEXIBILITY PARTNERSHIP ACT OF 1999**

**WELLSTONE AMENDMENTS NOS. 41–42**

(Ordered to lie on the table.)

Mr. WELLSTONE submitted two amendments intended to be proposed by him to amendment No. 31 proposed by Mr. JEFFORDS to the bill (S. 280) to provide for education flexibility partnerships; as follows:

**AMENDMENT No. 41**

On page 3, between lines 15 and 16, insert the following:

(8)(A) Part A of title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 is intended to provide supplementary educational services to low achieving children attending schools with relatively high concentrations of students from low income families.

(B) Other than fiscal year 1966, Congress has never passed legislation that provided the maximum funding authorized to carry out such part.

(C) The fiscal year 1999 appropriation for such part is less than half of the level required to fund such part of the maximum authorized level.

(D) By funding such part at the maximum authorized level, the Federal Government will provide more assistance for disadvantaged children than the Federal Government did for fiscal year 1999.

(E) The Senate is committed to funding such part at the maximum authorized level.

**AMENDMENT No. 42**

On page 15, between lines 2 and 3, insert the following:

(F) local and state plans, use of funds, and accountability, under the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act of 1998, except to permit the formation of secondary and post-secondary consortia.

**WELLSTONE (AND OTHERS) AMENDMENT NO. 43**

(Ordered to lie on the table.)

Mr. WELLSTONE (for himself, Mr. REED, and Mr. KENNEDY) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by them to amendment No. 31 proposed by Mr. JEFFORDS to the bill, S. 280, *supra*; as follows:

On page 15, between lines 2 and 3, insert the following:

“(F) Sections 1114b and 1115c of Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965;”.

**TORRICELLI AMENDMENTS NOS. 44–45**

(Ordered to lie on the table.)

Mr. TORRICELLI submitted two amendments intended to be proposed by him to amendment No. 31 proposed by Mr. JEFFORDS to the bill, S. 280, *supra*; as follows:

**AMENDMENT No. 44**

At the end, add the following:

**SEC. 01. DEMONSTRATION GRANTS.**

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds that—

(1) the length of the academic year at most elementary and secondary schools in the United States consists of approximately 175 to 180 academic days, while the length of the academic years at elementary and secondary schools in a majority of the other industrialized countries consists of approximately 190 to 240 academic days;

(2) eighth-grade students from the United States have scored lower, on average, in mathematics than students in Japan, France, and Canada;

(3) various studies indicate that extending the length of the academic year at elementary and secondary schools results in a significant increase in actual student learning time, even when much of the time in the extended portion of the academic year is used for increased teacher training and increased parent-teacher interaction;

(4) in the final 4 years of schooling, students in schools in the United States are required to spend a total of 1,460 hours on core academic subjects, which is less than half of the 3,528 hours so required in Germany, the 3,280 hours so required in France, and the 3,170 hours so required in Japan;

(5) American students' lack of formal schooling is not counterbalanced with more homework as only 29 percent of American students report spending at least 2 hours on homework per day compared to half of all European students;

(6) extending the length of the academic year at elementary and secondary schools will lessen the need for review, at the beginning of an academic year, of course material covered in the previous academic year; and

(7) in 1994, the Commission on Time and Learning recommended that school districts keep schools open longer to meet the needs of children and communities.

(b) DEMONSTRATION GRANTS AUTHORIZED.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Education, from amounts appropriated under subsection (d) for a fiscal year, shall award demonstration grants to local educational agencies to—

(A) enable the local educational agencies to extend the length of the school year to 210 days;

(B) study the feasibility of an effective method for extending learning time within